

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	5 October 2026
TITLE	Environment Department Report on the implementation of the Language Policy and contribution towards the realisation of the Welsh Language Strategy 2023 - 2033
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Language Committee about the Environment Department's contribution to the implementation of the Council's Language Policy and Welsh language promotion activities.
- 1.2 The Environment Department encompasses a range of front-line services across service-areas including Waste and Recycling, Transport, Planning and Public Protection.
- 1.3 The nature of the Department's services means that staff come into regular contact with members of the public, councillors, other Council staff, and other authorities and external partners.
- 1.4 As a Department, we ensure that our services are provided in the customer's preferred language, and the Department's officers make every effort to promote the use of the Welsh language in various activities and by virtue of their work.

2. RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

1. What policies and plans are in place within your department to contribute to the objectives of the language strategy? Identify the priority area (early years, learning, work and service, the community or research and technology)

Relevant policies and strategic plans / Projects in the Council Plan

Local Development Plan

The Environment Department leads on the Council Plan's project of preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP), which is a priority under the Green Gwynedd theme in the Council Plan 2023 – 2028.

The Planning Policy Team within the Department leads the work of preparing the new LDP, and the Welsh language is central to the work, including preparing an Assessment of the Likely Impacts of the Gwynedd Local Development Plan on the Welsh Language. This work is being prepared by an expert in planning and the Welsh Language.

In the meantime, the Planning Policy Team continues to monitor the Joint Local Development Plan (2011-26), which includes the preparation of an annual monitoring report. Consideration of the Welsh language has been central to the preparation of the current Plan, which includes Planning Policy PS1 which relates specifically to the Welsh language and culture.

As part of the current Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance (Maintaining and creating distinctive and sustainable communities) includes detailed guidance on how to take the Welsh language into account when dealing with applications for new development. In line with the guidance, whenever a Welsh language assessment or statement is submitted with a planning application, it is verified by the Council's Language Unit.

Other projects and schemes

Planning & Planning Policy

When dealing with any planning application, they are determined in accordance with the Joint Local Development Plan, which includes a specific Welsh language policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance which provides detailed guidance on how to implement the policy.

Using this approach, the Planning Service continues to contribute towards the promotion of the language in the area ensuring that applications have regard for the Welsh language.

During the period April 2025 to March 2026, three Language Assessments and 11 Language Statements were received with applications that met the thresholds within Planning Policy PS1. In addition, in accordance with Annex 5 of the Supplementary Planning Guidance, consideration has been given to the Welsh language for applications falling below the threshold of those requiring a formal Statement or Assessment.

Three planning applications were refused partly due to language issues, and eight applications were granted permission with a planning condition for language mitigation measures. These included that any new name should derive from historical, geographical or local links to the area where possible, or that any signage advertising and promoting the development within and outside the site must be Welsh or bilingual with priority given to Welsh.

This ties in with the Place Name Protection project to which several Services from the Environment Department contribute, including the Planning and Building Control Service.

The Planning Service has also been working with the Council's Language Unit on the work of Y Gymraeg mewn Busnes (Welsh in Business). A note that raises awareness and offers advice is sent out with pre-application advice responses and an information note is also available for officers to use on planning decisions. A planning condition has been imposed on all new housing developments to ensure a Welsh name for the house or estate.

During 2025/26, a condition was imposed on 21 planning permissions to ensure a Welsh name for new businesses and almost 200 new homes.

Building Control

The Building Control Service has responsibility for the management of street naming and the naming and numbering of properties, with a statutory duty to ensure that any new names or amendments to street and property names are allocated logically and consistently.

Whilst it does not have enforcement powers to reject an application unless there is duplication or the name is inappropriate, the Building Control Service continues to take a proactive approach to highlighting the historical and cultural significance of Welsh place names.

The latest annual statistics show that 90 applications were submitted to change or register property names, and 82% of the names registered were Welsh names, with others asking to change from one English name to another. Applications to change from a Welsh name to an English name mainly related to a business name(s). Furthermore, it is very pleasing to report that 12 property owners have changed the name of their property from English back to Welsh following discussions with the Building Control Service, with many appreciating the original historic name (others changing from one Welsh name to another or naming a property for the first time in Welsh).

Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan is a statutory document which the Council is required to prepare and review under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000. The current Plan recognises the Welsh language and local culture as one of the special qualities of the area and includes policies and actions to support and promote the language. Work is currently underway to review the Plan.

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team officers hold events through Welsh and/or bilingually. These include rural skills training, walks (including specific ones for new Welsh speakers) and talks. They also attend events such as Sioe Nefyn to raise awareness of the designation and the work. A bilingual newsletter produced by the Team each year, Llygad Llŷn, highlights the range of activities held. Hard copies are distributed in the area and an electronic version is available on the Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website, [here](#).

Biodiversity and Nature

Much of the work of Biodiversity and Nature officers involves working closely with the public, and facilitating access to our natural environment is an integral part of their work.

Biodiversity officers carry out regular work to encourage interest and promote nature, attending events such as Sioe Nefyn and Sioe Meirionnydd. Such events offer an opportunity to put on nature-related activities and engage with the public about the work of the Gwynedd Nature Partnership, all in Welsh or bilingually.

A series of information pages about the work of the officers of these teams and the Gwynedd Nature Partnership are available on [the Council website](#), and regular use of social media accounts provides a visible place to promote Welsh terms and names of species etc.

Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation

The Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation (SAC) team continues to lead on a bilingual education package, *Tir a Môr*, for primary schools. Since we previously reported on this, hard copies of the pack have been distributed to all primary schools in Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, ensuring that standard resources are available for teachers to use with their classes. A digital version is available free of charge on the website www.tiramor.cymru, widening access for teachers, pupils and families. Further details of this work can be found in section 6.

The SAC team produces a bilingual magazine, *O Dan y Don*, which focuses on marine issues and is created through the work of the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation. This free publication raises awareness of Gwynedd's unique marine environment, promoting the use of Welsh alongside English. The magazine also includes content that explores the connection between the sea, the Welsh language and the cultural heritage of the area, helping readers to connect with the local natural and historic environment.

In the past year, the team has also started a new project, *Lleisiau'r Môr*, which investigates the relationship between language, culture, heritage and the marine environment. The project explores how coastal communities use and transfer knowledge about the sea through local language and traditions, and how this can contribute to contemporary conservation work.

As well as the key projects, the nature, landscape and biodiversity teams within the Department undertake a wide range of engagement activities including talks, events and stalls at local shows. The officers actively promote the Welsh language through guided tours in Welsh, where participants explore local place names and species names, deepening their understanding of the language and landscape. Officers have also worked with new Welsh speakers, offering talks and walks to help them practise their Welsh and expand their vocabulary in an informal and supportive environment.

Road Safety

Road Safety officers work closely with schools and colleges and visit a number of locations in the county educating and promoting safety while walking and cycling. The visits are held in person and take place through the medium of Welsh. The team also promotes its work bilingually on websites and social media.

The following summarises the team's main activities during 2025/26 (April 2025 – March 2026):

- 48 schools have received cycling training - for 460 children.
- 4,281 have received general training in primary schools – story time, quizzes etc.
- Kerbcraft training has been delivered to 424 children.
- Pass Plus training (adults) introduced to 40 individuals.

- Promoting the Walk to School Week (May) + Walk to School Month (October) to all primary schools in Gwynedd.
- Holding events such as a quiz for youth clubs and various Urdd sessions, Bangor University activities (Freshers' Fair etc.)
- Visiting Cylchoedd Meithrin – promoting holding hands, car seat issues and wearing a safety belt.
- Running Criw Craidd Sessions for year 7 pupils in several secondary schools.
- Collaborating with Gwynedd Libraries to launch the Carys Ofalus Story Bag + Road Safety Educational Box.
- "Don't Drink and Drive" campaigns – engagement visits and information sharing in supermarkets across the county.
- Launch of Carys Ofalus' new Active Travel Book featuring scooter training sessions.
- Holding seasonal Road Safety competitions.
- Attending a variety of awareness raising events in libraries and fun day visits in leisure centres etc.

Waste and Recycling

The Waste and Recycling Service operates within the framework of the Council's Language Policy and ensures that services are provided bilingually. This includes all communications with residents, such as letters, information leaflets distributed to homes in the county, responses to enquiries, signs on vehicles and sites, including the website and social media messages.

The service also contributes to the Council's strategic objectives by:

- Ensuring that new jobs include appropriate language requirements.
- Supporting staff to develop their Welsh language skills through training and corporate support.
- Using Welsh as a working language at team meetings and in internal communication where possible.
- Ensuring that residents can receive services and hold discussions with officers through the medium of Welsh.
- Maintaining local services that reflect and support Welsh-speaking communities across Gwynedd.

Public Protection

Two Public Protection Services (Trading Standards and Licensing; Environmental Health) provide bilingual campaign materials, and application forms are all offered through the medium of Welsh. Officers also attend various events and engage with businesses and owners.

Policies such as the Statement of Licensing Policy 2024 recognise the need for businesses to consider the Welsh language and factors relevant to an area's culture when applying for an alcohol licence, and when running a business.

2. What else needs to be addressed in the next year to raise the status of the Welsh language and ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh?

We will continue to work on the preparation of a new Local Development Plan, where full consideration will be given to the Welsh language in the specific stages

involved in the work and this is outlined within the Delivery Agreement for the Plan. This shows how consideration is given to the Welsh language at specific stages of the process starting with the Preferred Strategy Document.

Waste and Recycling Services will continue to ensure that any new service developments, such as soft plastics collections, and the ongoing development of utilised computer systems (e.g. Bartec) consider the Welsh language from the outset, enabling residents, staff and businesses to use the service fully through the medium of Welsh.

The Department will continue to work with the Council's Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer to identify suitable training for staff to develop skills and build confidence. We will continue to highlight the training opportunities and language refresher courses to develop confidence in the Welsh language among Departmental staff. Information about these opportunities is shared in the Department's bulletins and through regular messages about new courses or training.

3. Has the development of technology impaired your ability to provide opportunities to use Welsh? If applicable, please provide an example. How do you ensure that the development of technology does not affect your ability to provide opportunities to use the Welsh language?

At times, new technology can present challenges if systems or software do not offer the same functions in Welsh as they do in English. This may mean delays and/or additional costs before implementing certain elements, or the need for additional modifications.

Generally, any external systems used are usually only available through the medium of English. However, the Department is working with the Council's corporate teams to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the Welsh language in the development of systems (e.g. the Bartec system in Waste and Recycling). With the support of the Council's Information Technology Service, we continue to ensure that any public-facing systems are available in both Welsh and English.

We ensure that any initial correspondence goes out bilingually, with Welsh first, to encourage and promote the use of the language wherever possible.

4. How do you keep a record of the people who use your service through the medium of Welsh? Can you share relevant data?

We always ensure that any initial correspondence is provided bilingually, with Welsh first, seeking to encourage and promote the use of the language.

Details of the chosen language of members of the public and stakeholders are entered through our systems ensuring that any correspondence is provided in the recipient's preferred language. Corporate information could be used to identify:

- The number of enquiries or complaints received in Welsh.
- Use of the service's Welsh web pages.
- Records of correspondence received and sent in Welsh.

5. What are the language skills of your staff?

The latest figures (August 2026) show a positive increase compared to the previous year in the number of Departmental staff who have received a language assessment, whether it is a self-assessment or a line manager assessment.

Number receiving an assessment (self-assessment or line manager assessment) – **95.8% (389)**

Number completing a self-assessment – **86.5% (351)**

Number reaching the language designations of the post – **89% (346)**

However, it should be noted that just because a member of staff does not meet the language requirements does not mean they are unable to offer a Welsh language service, and the Department promotes any opportunities for staff to attend training to develop language skills or a refresher.

There are regular efforts to draw the attention of staff to opportunities to improve and develop Welsh language skills, and with the help of the Council's Language Learning and Development Officer, to hold language lessons for a group of staff in the Waste service.

6. Please provide examples of any obstacles, complaints and commendations associated with the provision and promotion of Welsh-medium services.

The Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation (SAC) team continues to lead on a bilingual education pack, *Tir a Môr*, for primary schools. In the last year, new content has been added to the pack, and the resources are also promoted through the Welsh Government's Hwb platform. In addition, we are working with partners through initiatives such as *Y Môr a Ni* and the Welsh Ocean Literacy Coalition to promote the pack across Wales. There has also been interest from beyond Wales in the project's content and approach, highlighting its potential as a model for similar work in other areas.

In terms of general obstacles, the challenges that can be experienced regarding external computer systems have already been identified. Although elements of the back-office function are in English, positive collaboration with the Council's Information Technology Service ensures that internal systems are available in Welsh, and any public facing elements are fully bilingual.

The Environment Department's report to the Language Committee in 2025:

[Report by the Environment Department on the Implementation of the Language Policy and Contribution Towards Realising the Welsh Language Strategy](#)